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58-1614

10 March 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Support)
THROUGH: Director of Personnel
SUBJECT: Report of Visit to Field Stations

1. During the period 16 January to 28 February 1958 the Stations, Bases and Depots at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] were visited by the undersigned. The purpose of the trip was general orientation, discussion of support matters with field personnel, and to assist in the solution of support problems.

2. Subjects which were discussed generally included: Support of operations, Career Service Program, contract employees, finance and property accounts, administrative workload, overtime pay and compensatory time, leave, retirement, insurance programs, R&R program, hardship cases, administrative aspects of preparation for the employee and dependents' tour abroad, housing facilities and furnishings, schools, medical facilities and medical program, transportation and general living and work conditions.

3. Most stations are now staffed with a number of employees who have had several tours of duty abroad or at Headquarters, and who have had the benefit of numerous training courses. The good effect of this growth is readily apparent. The continuing problems of adjusting to changing conditions and requirements seem to be met with less difficulty and with less need of outside assistance in individual cases. The problems of day-to-day administrative activities are met with increasing efficiency, freeing more time of all concerned for the basic job at hand. Headquarters can now place more emphasis on policy and systems of support which will accommodate future requirements. The question of excessive or unnecessary administrative functions and reports was explored at each station. There were no suggestions or recommendations for either the reduction or elimination of present functions or reports.

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One of the problems of obtaining suitable housing at a cost within, or near, the allowance scale is the lack or scarcity of moderate dwellings which are habitable by American standards. Frequently, the range of available houses jumps from sub-standard units to those which are seemingly somewhat pretentious for the lower and middle employee grade groups. However, even in these instances, the outward appearance of the houses is often deceiving and the "livability" of the house is no better than the same employees would enjoy in the United States. In many instances rents are unrealistic in consideration of land values, construction costs, condition of the houses, etc. It appears that in many areas the owners set and adjust rents at about the top of the allowance scale. Raising the government employee allowance scale would not in these instances provide a lasting solution to the problem unless effective measures could be taken jointly by all government agencies representative in the area to boycott houses where unreasonable rents have been established. There is growing interest in this procedure which is becoming quite effective in some areas. The cost of utilities, especially where there are air conditioners, in some places represent a large portion of the cost which is in excess of the allowance scale.

Purchasing or building houses would appear to be practical and economical in some areas, however, this would present other problems such as a tendency to identify occupants with the Agency unless the program applied to all U.S. Government employees. In this event there probably would be a tendency toward "compound" developments and numerous exceptions would need to be made for our employees who use their homes for entertainment and operational purposes. With the exception of [REDACTED] it seems desirable that we continue the present policy of renting suitable housing, if available, and purchasing or building in cases of necessity. In the case of [REDACTED] it would appear desirable and economical to buy suitable houses for our civilian employees. The [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] intensifies the rental problem but houses appear to be on the market for sale at reasonable prices. Ownership in [REDACTED]

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c. Local Transportation

Public transportation in the cities visited is generally unusable by our employees, therefore, it is important that our employees have their own transportation either in the form

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probably results from the fact that it is undesirable to take personally owned automobiles to some areas where roads are poor, service is difficult to obtain, and the sale of automobiles when leaving the country is restricted or financially unattractive. It appears that the transportation requirements, official and personal, of most of our employees are adequately provided through the shipment of personally owned automobiles

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fication. However, it is believed that the problem of some employees whose work does not require official transportation and who do not have duty free import privileges needs further attention. This problem was discussed in paragraph "a." above.

d. Overtime Pay and Compensatory Time

There is evidence of a substantial improvement and more uniformity in the handling of overtime and compensatory time as a result of guidance and instructions recently issued to the field stations. The nature of our work has required, and undoubtedly will continue to require, substantial overtime on the part of our field employees. The categories of overtime which represent most of the problem at field stations seem to be:

- (1) Performed by stenographic and clerical personnel who are required to be on duty more than 40 hours per week, regardless of the workload. They are usually busy but would be required to be present in any event.

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(2) Performed by Communications personnel in the maintenance of schedules.

(3) Performed by duty officers at night and on week-ends and holidays.

(4) Performed by employees who remain at safe-houses, during periods of certain activities, on a 24 hour day basis.

(5) Performed by case officers in after duty hour meetings, by support personnel in meeting planes after hours, and the like.

(6) Performed in the office by employees in general, in the conduct of their regularly assigned duties, for irregular and sometimes short periods before hours, after hours, and on week-ends and holidays.

*Overtime
Question*

It seems that categories (1) and (2) deserve special consideration for continued overtime pay. The policy for category (3) has been established in a recent issuance to the stations. Categories (5) and (6) are the most troublesome since overtime performed under these circumstances is virtually uncontrollable and the personal treatment afforded by individuals may create serious morale problems. Category (4) can be defined and controlled but the nature of the duty gives rise to a serious question as to the amount of time which should be credited for payment purposes. This latter category might be considered along with category (3). Although uniform treatment is not being afforded overtime payment at different stations no specific recommendation is made for action at this time since the Director of Personnel is now engaged in the development of a new policy covering the subject.

e. Medical Facilities

Generally, at the stations visited, a doctor or medical technician, or both, was assigned to those areas where other adequate services and facilities were not readily available to our employees. This service is extremely important to the morale, as well as the physical well being of employees and

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their dependents. In the absence of readily available medical services minor symptoms of illness, such as a child's slightly above normal temperature, can become major problems adversely affecting the morale and work of the station. There are also occasional serious medical problems but the purpose of the above comment is to stress the value of available medical facilities at isolated posts regardless of the volume of the medical workload.

f. Schools

Educational facilities at the lower levels were considered satisfactory by most station employees. Generally, where there were no established American schools, or acceptable local schools, our employees have organized a program under the Calvert System utilizing wives of employees as teachers. Because of the young age of most children of our employees, these facilities appear adequate at this time. However, in anticipation of future needs for education at higher levels, this subject should have continuing review in order that timely action can be taken as the need arises.

g. Personal Problems Affecting Continuance of Tour Abroad

Many employees seem reconciled to the fact that problems, such as illness in the family, may occur at home in the United States during their absence and face such problems as they occur with minimum disturbance to the job. Others buy insurance to help pay for the cost of a trip home in case of emergency or they are in a financial position to make such a trip if necessary. However, it appears that we should continue to expect occasional instances of personal emergencies where an individual is unable to finance a trip home, and whose reaction to the emergency is such that his or her services to the station would be greatly impaired if official assistance is not provided. In such instances it appears that serious consideration should be given to immediate PCS assignment of the employee to Washington and early replacement in the field. Length of the remainder of the employee's tour of duty, his value to the station, availability of replacement, etc., should be considered in each case.

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h. Career Service

With the growth in experience of employees and with tangible evidence of career service action in promotions, assignments, and employee benefits, the term "career service" is gradually becoming meaningful to field employees and there is less apprehension and criticism over the failure of something starting to happen immediately upon obtaining membership in the career staff. There is understandable unhappiness when highly regarded and recommended employees are passed over for promotion in favor of those stationed elsewhere.

Employees generally, are greatly interested in receiving advance notice of their next assignment. Often this interest reflects apprehension as to what advance arrangements they should make regarding housing, schools, purchase of clothing and the like. It appears that, first, employees want to know if they will be assigned to another field station shortly after return to Washington. If they are to be assigned to Washington for at least a tour of duty they are most interested in knowing the Division or Staff to which they will be assigned. Relatively few placed great emphasis upon knowing the specific job to which they will be assigned. Most employees expressed satisfaction with knowing the location, Division or Staff, and general type of assignment at least several months in advance of their departure from the station. Many employees are now receiving such notice and it is known that a great deal of attention is being given this matter. It appears that the continuing problem lies in those cases where, because of uncertainty of staffing requirements at a future time, or where there may be some question about the individual's performance or ability, it is difficult to determine the next assignment prior to his availability for interviews, training, etc.

i. Assignment of Secretaries, Administrative Assistants and Clerical Employees

It appears that the existing policy and method of staffing the stations with officer personnel is generally effective and successful from the standpoint of operations as well as morale. There is, however, a problem with respect to the selection and assignment of secretaries, administrative assistants, and

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clerical employees. Most staff employees in this category are single women. Wives of station employees, hired by contract, meet the requirement for secretarial-administrative assistant-clerical services at some posts and supplement the regular staff in others. However, in some instances where qualified dependent wives are not available for employment or where living conditions at the post require their attention to family and housekeeping matters during normal office hours, the stations suffer from the lack of adequate clerical support. Performing clerical duties consumes an inordinate amount of time of officers who are not proficient in clerical work. Station officials repeatedly requested the assignment of mature and experienced employees who are familiar with Headquarters procedures and requirements in their field of work. They would also like, whenever possible, to have employees who have had previous field experience. There was general opinion that such employees are available at Headquarters and at certain field stations but because they have progressed in grade beyond the grades established for this type job in the smaller stations of the Mid-East and Far East; because these posts are considered less desirable for single women; or for a variety of other reasons, they are not assigned in adequate numbers to the stations where they are most needed. This problem is under consideration by the Career Service, operating officers, and the Director of Personnel.

5. Numerous individual cases on which some action or clarification was requested have been referred directly to the office concerned.

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Deputy Director of Personnel

cc: Director of Personnel
Deputy Director (Plans)
C/FE Division
C/NEA Division
Director of Communications

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